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THE PLOT DEVICE OF FALSE REPORT

By JOHN C. MCCLOSKEY

IN the dramas of Shakspere from *Much Ado About Nothing* to *Cymbeline* false report is an important and recurrent plot device.

False report underlies the workings of main plot and sub-plot of *Much Ado About Nothing,* and it is used in contrary ways. As malicious villainy it complicates the Hero-Claudio-Don John story and interrupts the course of true love; in the Benedick-Beatrice story it removes the impediments to true love and unites the lovers in spite of themselves. Its end is evil in the main plot, but in the sub-plot its end is good.

With Hero and Claudio false report is presented as simple villainy motivated by the desire of the morose and melancholy malcontent Don John for revenge. After an ineffectual rebellion against his brother Don Pedro, Don John, defeated and apparently reconciled, nurses his hate for his brother's favorite, Claudio, a "young start-up" who has all the glory of his overthrow. "If I can cross him any way," explains Don John, "I bless myself every way." Informed by his follower Borachio of the intended marriage of "the most exquisite Claudio" and Hero, heir of Leonato, Don John, actuated by revenge, makes two attempts through false report upon the happiness of Claudio. The first attempt is an accusation of personal treachery against Don Pedro, and the second is slander against Hero; both are, therefore, assaults on personal honor and reputation.

The eavesdropping Borachio overhears Claudio and Don Pedro agree that Don Pedro shall woo Hero for Claudio. Apprised of this situation by Borachio, Don John seizes his chance to revenge himself upon Claudio doubly, that is, by preventing his marriage to Hero and at the same time sowing dissension between Don Pedro and his favorite. Through the naive device of pretended mistaken identity he sows the seed of suspicion and distrust in his enemy's mind. At Leonato's feast he feigns to believe that the

masked Claudio is Benedick and informs him that Don Pedro, enamored of Hero, woos her for himself and that he has heard Don Pedro swear his affection. Borachio reinforces the credibility of this false report by stating that he, too, not only heard this but that Don Pedro swore he would marry Hero tonight.

Claudio, a man of simple, trusting innocence, accepts this false report of his friend's treachery, which is evidenced only by a lie; and without skepticism, doubt, or the exercise of critical reason believes the calumniators. Immediately he abandons Hero to his apparently false agent, Don Pedro. Ignorant of the wooing by proxy agreement between Claudio and Don Pedro, Benedick innocently aggravates the false report by his honestly mistaken interpretation of the relations between Hero and Don Pedro when he tells Claudio that "the prince hath got your Hero."

Thus far in the play false report is due to malicious villainy on the part of Don John, imperfect information on the part of Benedick, and faulty evidence on the part of Antonio secured through the eavesdropping of a servant; the effect of the second and the third is to reinforce the first.

There is little psychology in the reactions of Claudio. Uncritically accepting the false report, he simply falls into melancholy and, resigning Hero to Don Pedro, creeps into the sedges like a poor hurt fowl.

Immediately, however, Don Pedro rectifies the false report by informing Claudio in the presence of Leonato and Beatrice that he has won Hero in Claudio's name and has obtained her father's consent that she marry Claudio. Simple, direct honesty thus defeats malicious villainy, and false report is speedily extinguished before tragic complications develop.

Yet Don John makes a second, and more determined, effort to be revenged upon Claudio through the medium of false report. The motive is, again, malicious villainy. Act-

ing upon the suggestion of Borachio, Don John slanders Hero in his second attempt to cross the marriage of Claudio. In the suggestive and significant words of Borachio, "... there shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty that jealousy shall be called assurance and all the preparation overthrown." The slander is presented as an accusation against the faithfulness of Hero. But this time Don John offers apparent evidence which is of more convincing authority than a mere lie. He has arranged the staging of a scene at Hero's chamber window that shall furnish seeming eye-witness proof of Hero's treachery. When on the night before his wedding day Claudio sees a man at Hero's chamber window and hears the stranger and a woman whom he takes for granted is Hero speak, he unquestioningly accepts the evidence of his own senses. The suspicion implanted by false report becomes immediate certainty, and the calumniator is again believed. No more critical than his friend, Don Pedro is likewise deceived by false appearances. The apparent evidence is sufficient for firm conviction, because neither Claudio nor Don Pedro exercises the critical faculty; rather, they exhibit naive acceptance of things seen and heard. The success of the false report lies in the abused person's failure to see through appearances to reality.

The dramatic result of the false report is nearly tragic. The victim of a fixed idea, with its genesis in outraged honor and jealousy, Claudio cruelly repudiates Hero at the altar. Nothing that Hero says can affect his certitude that his intended wife is but the sign and semblance of her honor. Slandered as a common stale, Hero swoons, having made no convincing defense beyond denial of guilt.

Yet there are some detached and critical observers who, knowing Hero's character, doubt the seeming evidence. Unlike Claudio, whose reason is clouded by jealousy, unlike Don Pedro, whose sense of honor has been outraged, and unlike Leonato, whose parental affection has apparently been betrayed, Friar Francis, Benedick, and Beatrice, not being involved personally in the passions of the others, can think rationally and clearly. Although in them reason and the passions are not at war, they nevertheless take no

effective steps to expose the slander of Hero by examining the circumstances of the chamber-window incident and by questioning those persons directly and indirectly involved. Although not believing that Hero stood at the window, they fail to inquire who else might have stood there. And so it remains for the watch to expose by accident the slanderous false report.

The device of false report is thus employed in the main plot as malicious villainy; its motivation is revenge, and its end is evil; it is melodramatic and tragi-comic, not psychological. Its victims are creatures of simple, trusting innocence. It is employed quite differently, however, in the subplot. With Benedick and Beatrice it assumes the form of good-natured, well-intentioned jesting; it is motivated by the comic spirit, its end is good, and its effects are psychological. Benedick and Beatrice are sophisticates taken in by vanity. None of the four victims, however, subjects the apparent evidence to critical examination. Although doubting the slander cast on Hero, Benedick accepts the report of Beatrice's love for him on the evidence of Leonato's white-bearded honesty, that is, upon mere authority. Beatrice, likewise, accepts the results of her eavesdropping without skepticism and without questoin.

In *Twelfth Night* false report is an effective comic device in the subplot of intrigue. It is employed in a manner much like that of the subplot of *Much Ado About Nothing,* with some interesting modifications.[1]

Instead of overhearing through eavesdropping, as did Benedick and Beatrice, false reports of their love for each other, Malvolio reads in a riddling letter, which he has found while walking in Olivia's garden, strongly hinted but indirect suggestions that his mistress is in love with him. The motive of the pranksters who wrote and planted the letter is revenge. Malvolio has offended Sir Toby by his arrogant officiousness; the steward, forgetting his place, had presumed to reprimand Olivia's uncle as if he were Sir Toby's equal. It rankles Feste that Malvolio has, by calling him in the presence of his mistress a barren rascal, cast aspersions on his professional capacity. Fabian is re-

sentful of Malvolio's bringing him out of favor with Olivia over a bear-baiting. And Maria, because she loves Sir Toby and because she detests Malvolio as a pompous servant, a time-pleaser, an affected ass, and a self-centered prig, devises the trick based upon false report.

The end, however, is comic. Bursting with self-love and already, through an excess of vanity, picturing himself as the husband of his mistress, the steward finds in the anonymous letter addressed apparently in Olivia's hand "To the unknown beloved, this, and my good wishes" only confirmation of his overweeing ambition and self-esteem. Gulled by his own egotism he suspects nothing, and, as is conventional in the comedies, is thoroughly uncritical and unskeptical. By leading Malvolio, the willing victim of self-love, into an exaggerated exhibition of his humourous folly, the conspirators make a fool of him, expose him, and so achieve their revenge. The pricking of his bubble of vanity through the medium of false report has, however, a comic purpose. It is a matter of laughter rather than of serious or irreparable injury. It is high comedy rather than tragedy or even tragi-comedy. Here Shakspere blends the motive of Don John, revenge, minus his malicious villainy, however, with the comic purpose of Don Pedro, minus, however, the resultant matchmaking, although it is true that in the end Maria ensnares Sir Toby in the net of matrimony; that is, false report, though motivated by revenge, is used for the purposes of comic art.

False report is the major plot device of *Othello*. Based upon direct slander, insinuation, and deliberate misinterpretation of the apparent evidence, it is so employed as to achieve revenge through the stimulation of the passion of jealousy. The intelligent, crafty, efficient Iago, because of failure to secure promotion, envy of the man who did secure it, and suspicion that his superior has been intimate with his wife Emilia, uses the medium of false report to revenge himself upon Othello and to ruin the reputation of Cassio so that he may secure the lieutenant's place. Wounded vanity, a sense of injustice, and jealousy motivate Iago in his propagation of false report, and his ends are, therefore, not only serious but self-seeking and unscrupulous.

His false report is directed to Roderigo, his dupe, and to Othello, the object of his hate, against Cassio, who holds the lieutenancy that should be Iago's by justice of proved merit and the old gradation, and against Desdemona, who is to be the instrument by which the ancient will even himself with the Moor, wife for wife.

With Roderigo, Iago employs direct falsehood and apparent evidence. He bluntly tells Roderigo that Desdemona is in love with Cassio and that if Roderigo wants her for himself he must get Cassio out of the way. To support his lie he adduces seeming circumstantial evidence which rests upon a wilful misinterpretation of innocent actions and the distortion of them into proofs of guilt. Impelled by his unrequited passion for Desdemona, Roderigo accepts the lie, although unwillingly, and the calumniator is once more believed. The result of acceptance of the calumny is an intrigue to discredit Cassio by getting him drunk, arousing his rash and sudden choler, and thus provoking him to a quarrel that will breach military discipline and so cause the loss of his lieutenancy to Iago and make Roderigo's way to Desdemona's heart easier.

More important than the affair of Cassio is Iago's intrigue against Othello's conjugal happiness. In his intrigue to even himself with the Moor, wife for wife, his instruments are Cassio and Desdemona. His accusation against Desdemona is essentially that of Don John against Hero; his method is, likewise, essentially that of Borachio.

Somewhat like Claudio, Othello is a man of simple, trusting innocence who accepts the apparent evidence of his senses without critical evaluation. Where Othello differs, however, from Claudio is not only in the depth and individualization of his character, but also in the dramatist's expert employment of the psychology of jealousy and suggestibility. Desdemona, too, is an innocent and guileless creature, open, frank, warmhearted, and loyal, but tactless and unsuspicious. Desdemona's free and open character being such as to whet conjugal suspicion, Iago through suggestion and innuendo begins his insidious poisoning of Othello's mind and speedily evokes in the Moor the passion of sexual jealousy.

When, with seeming honesty and disinterested friendship, Iago has cleverly suggested that Othello has cause for suspicion of his wife, Othello asks for evidence before he doubts and when he doubts, proof. Iago then offers proof in the form of logical argument: Venetians are of licentious dispositions, and Desdemona is a Venetian; in marrying Othello, Desdemona had deceived her father, and since by that act she has demonstrated her capacity to dissemble, Othello is justified in suspecting that she may also deceive him. This is, of course, reinforced by her father's dire warning:

> Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:
> She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee.

Although the slander so far is by indirection and innuendo, its result is to arouse such a degree of jealous suspicion that Othello leaps to the conclusion himself and demands proof of the accusation, which is, in reality, based only on false report. Iago gives it apparently to him.

Now that Othello is in a jealous rage, wherein his passions have usurped his reason, Iago proceeds to direct slander. He has heard, he reports confidentially to Othello, Cassio mutter in his sleep, "Sweet Desdemona, let us be wary, let us hide our loves," and other revelations much more damning. Subsequently without any euphemistic reticence he makes an unequivocal accusation of Desdemona's marital infidelity. These "dangerous conceits" working upon the highly suggestible and unskeptical mind of the General drive him into a frenzy. The decisive link in the chain of apparent evidence against Desdemona is the handkerchief which, on Iago's testimony, she gave to her lover Cassio. Without critical examination of the evidence presented by Iago's false report and with certainty induced only by emotional jealousy, he orders Iago to murder Cassio, damns Desdemona, and sentences her to death, doing all, he thinks, in honor.

Thus through false report Iago has made enormous progress in his malicious intrigue, and Othello has become so utterly unskeptical that any mere suggestion made by Iago is taken for surety. The Moor is, in Iago's words, a cred-

ulous fool to be so taken in by false report and seeming circumstantial evidence. The intrigue has a tragic issue in the murder of Desdemona and the suicide of Othello. Finally, Iago adds the last bit to his campaign of slander and vilification when, after he has slain Roderigo and wounded Cassio, he accuses Bianca of being a party to the crime.

The intrigue of Iago is purposeful; its ends are selfish and malicious; its instruments are innocent and trusting people; it is concerned with personal reputation and marital happiness; it employs false report, eavesdropping, and the wilful misinterpretation of apparent evidence; and it has a tragic culmination.

False report is a basic plot device also in the subplot of *King Lear.* The intrigue of Edmund and its fatal consequences proceed from it. Motivated by rebellion against the plague of custom imposed by his illegitimacy and by covetousness of legitimate Edgar's land, the bastard Edmund utilizes the medium of a letter to transmit his false report, a device previously employed by the dramatist for comic purposes in *Twelfth Night.* False report is here in the form of direct calumny and unmitigated falsehood, and once more the calumniator is believed without real evidence or critical doubt. So that he "shall top the legitimate," Edmund writes to himself a letter and signs it with his half-brother Edgar's name; the letter, purportedly from a son revolting unnaturally against the affection due the parent from the child and against the claims of parental authority, proposes the murder of Gloucester, the father. Its end is self-seeking, its means are evil, and its outcome is tragic.

By the time Shakspere wrote *King Lear,* false report had become in his plays a conventional and recurrent plot device which he used now for comic, now for tragic or tragicomic purposes. The devices concomitant with false report had also become conventional and recurrent. Like the letter to Brutus instigated by Cassius in *Julius Caesar,* Edgar's letter, so Edmund says, was thrown in at the casement of his closet. Through eavesdropping, Edmund offers to Glou-

cester, as did Don John to Claudio in *Much Ado About Nothing,* auricular assurance of the credibility of his false report, evidence, however, which can but prove Edgar's guilt, for the father is *a priori* convinced of his villainy. In its employment of apparent evidence and eavesdropping, Edmund's intrigue against Edgar and Gloucester is reminiscent of that of Iago against Desdemona and Othello. Just as Iago was the seemingly honest and devoted friend, so Edmund is the apparently loving and dutiful son. As effectively as Iago did with Othello, though much more easily and quickly, Edgar, through false evidence, eavesdropping, and the misinterpretation of appearances, manipulates his father's mind and damns his brother as Iago damned Desdemona. The apparent evidence of the handwriting and the signature, strengthened by oral slander, is accepted at face value by Gloucester, who flies into a passion, analogous to that of Othello and Lear, though in a different way, so that passion usurps his reason. Edmund's soliloquy at the end of I, ii, in which he sums up the situation and explains his motives, is similar in essential content to that of Iago at the end of I, iii, of *Othello.* Like Othello, Gloucester does not give the accused a fair chance of defense, and as Othello sought Desdemona's death, Gloucester seeks Edgar's. Like Iago, Edmund attains his end; but, also like Iago, nemesis descends upon Edmund, his intrigue is exposed, and his end is tragic disaster.

Posthumus' position in *Cymbeline* is a tragi-comic analogue to that of Othello, and the position of the traducer Iachimo is a faint but unmalicious replica of Iago's. Posthumus has, however, himself initiated the situation which disturbs his marital happiness, and he is, therefore, not a victim of evil in any really tragic or even pathetic sense. Rather he is victimized by his own bad judgment and callow inexperience, by his excessive self-confidence which cries out for nemesis, and by his rash boasting of his wife's virtue and constancy among sophisticated continental courtiers. Making a sporting wager with a self-confident stranger and losing, as it seems at the moment, he accepts the result, attempts, as is the conventional procedure with wronged husbands, to murder his wife for her supposed unfaithfulness, and thinking he has succeeded, is filled

with remorse and thoughts of self-destruction, as is also conventional with the husband who kills his beloved. Although he is in these respects the conventional wronged husband, he brings his fate on his own head. But in so doing, he is, nevertheless, victimized by false report attested by apparently convincing evidence.

But in *Cymbeline* a queer thing happens with the perpetrator of the false report; it is as if Iachimo is disdainful of the ease of his victory and impatient of the naiveté of the device of the calumniator believed. The credulousness of the wronged husband is too much for Iachimo, and the sophisticated villain becomes his own critic when he suggests to Posthumus, already convinced of his wife's frailty, that the bracelet might have been lost by Imogen or secured through bribery of her servants. That is, he attempts to instruct the object of his villainy in the desirability of critical examination of the evidence presented and of the irrationality of hasty judgment resting upon circumstantial evidence and emotion. The demands of the plot, nevertheless, require that Posthumus, who belongs generally to the same character grouping as Don Claudio and Othello, be credulous and accept the final bit of apparent evidence, which, had he examined it critically, he might have surmised, to have been derived at second hand from a bribed waiting maid, as could have been the rest of the evidence. But the significant point is that Shakspere injects a skeptical note into the conventional acceptance of false report.

Imogen's reaction to false report is, however, decidedly different, and after her brief period of uncertainty in which the testimony of Iachimo has fleetingly persuaded her of Posthumus' infidelity, it is as positive as Emilia's reaction to false report concerning Desdemona and Beatrice's concerning Hero. Clear-headed and constant like Portia and Rosalind and innocent of evil like Desdemona, though not, like her, naive and trusting, Imogen's mind is not tortured by that suggestibility and distorted by that credulousness which made Claudio, Othello, and Posthumus the dupes of suggestion, evasion, and calumny. When Iachimo, with a specious appeal to retributive justice, suggests that Imogen retaliate and be revenged on Posthumus in kind, her

critical mind detects instantly the deceit of Iachimo and his selfish motive. Her reason penetrates through the seeming evidence to the truth of the character of the traduced and to the self-seeking desires of the calumniator. Instantly she repulses the Italian's improper advances and summarily rejects the false report.

Imogen's conduct illustrates what happens when reason rather than emotion governs and is, perhaps, Shakspere's final comment on the well-worn subject, which had long been one of his stock dramatic devices. When reason and passion war in the tragedies, passion dominates and the result is tragic disaster. If, however, reason prevails, as is true of Imogen in the tragi-comedy *Cymbeline,* the seeming tragic situation may be resolved in a happy conclusion. The issue, then, in false report is reason and the critical mind versus emotion and hasty judgment.

False report is often employed by the dramatist in situations involving marital relations, although with Cassius in *Julius Caesar,* Edmund in *King Lear,* and Maria and Sir Toby in *Twelfth Night* it is directed toward other objects. Frequently it is supported by dramatic conventions like eavesdropping, the calumniator believed, false appearances, obsession, sexual jealousy, revenge, circumstantial evidence, simple, helpless innocence, and forged letters. It may be accidental, that is, the result of unpremeditated eavesdropping, or it may be purposeful and directed toward either a good or a malicious end. Where it is accidental, the complications are not serious and the issue is a happy one; where it is purposeful, the issue may be happy or fatal, depending upon whether the action is comic or tragic.

As the data of the play direct it has its motivation variously in malicious villainy, as with Don John, in self-seeking as with Cassius and Edmund, in self-seeking combined with revenge as with Iago, in jest and the comic spirit as with Don Pedro, in jest and the comic spirit combined with revenge as with Maria and Sir Toby, or in a sporting wager as with Iachimo. Usually the victims credulously accept without critical evaluation the apparent and circumstantial evidence adduced in support of the false report,

and this is especially true in cases of sexual jealousy, as in *Othello,* where the emotions cloud the reason. The method of all the perpetrators of false report bearing upon marital infidelity is the manipulation of seeming truth into positive proof through the coloring and misinterpretation of the apparent evidence. This device meets with no effective check until *Cymbeline,* where Imogen, subjectily rejects his slauderous attack on her husband Posthumus.

Imogen illustrates the rational reaction toward false report rather than the emotional one. Although rejection of false report has been foreshadowed by Emilia in *Othello* and by Benedick, Beatrice, and Friar Francis in *Much Ado,* all of them were ineffectual in exposing it. It is only Imogen who effectively disposes of it on first contact.

In comedy false report is eventually exposed, the villain is defeated, and the lovers reconciled; or where the situation is not a marital one the perpetrators of the hoax confess and the mysteries are thus cleared up with no irreparable injury done to anyone. In tragedy, false report persists until the catastrophe, which it is instrumental in bringing about. In tragi-comedy, at least in *Cymbeline,* it is either summarily rejected or, if temporarily accepted, fails, as in comedy, to produce a fatal issue. In comedy and tragedy jealous suspicion, generated by false report, hardens into certainty, or if the false report is of another nature it is accepted at face value. But in tragi-comedy, false report, if subjected to reason, is rejected. Perhaps Imogen, who thinks rather than feels, and Iachimo, who is amused at the credulity of his victim, are Shakspere's last word on a well-worn plot device used in many of his plays to secure selfish ends or to wreck innocent lives.

[1]False report occurs also in *As You Like It,* but it is there a minor and inconclusive device having no important bearing upon the course of the action or the fortunes of the characters. It is employed directly and naively in the form of a lie by Oliver to assure the fatal defeat of his brother Orlando in a wrestling match with Charles, the Duke's wrestler. Oliver is motivated by jealousy of Orlando's handsome person, by envy of his popularity with the people, and by his desire to rid himself of Orlando so that he can retain with impunity his brother's inheritance, which he has expropriated. When, however, Orlando defeats Charles in physical combat, the effects of his brother's false report are immediately neutralized, and the device ceases to operate as an effective agent of the complication.

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TOLSTOY, GOETHE, AND *KING LEAR*

By Robert J. Kane

IN an article published on the eve of the first world war, Robert de Machiels discussed at some length the parallels between Tolstoy's final wanderings and the story of King Lear.[1] Having compared their pity for the poor, their experience of the storm, their pursuit by the faithful daughter, and their ecstatic death, he queried, "si c'est Shakespeare qui a deviné et pressenti Tolstoï ou bien si c'est Tolstoï qui prolonge Shakespeare."[2]

To one familiar with Tolstoy's denigration of Shakspere's play, this would seem ironical enough; but in 1931 the parallelism was again pointed out — this time by Adrien Turel, who observed that the aged Tolstoy exemplified in his own person the very faults of character and behavior for which he had so strongly criticized Lear. Thus he signed over to his wife his property and income; and when this "mehr fiktive als reale Abdication" failed to satisfy him, he took to the roads "um in [einem] Bahnwärterhäuschen zu sterben."[3]

It will be remembered that the greater part of Tolstoy's essay *Shakespeare and the Drama*[4] is devoted to *King Lear,* a scene-by-scene analysis of which convinces him that "it is a very bad, carelessly composed production" evoking only aversion and weariness. In situation and action he finds it unnatural, arbitrary, and full of gross anachronism; he instances the lack of motive for Lear's abdication and Gloucester's strange attitude toward his sons.[5] After a similar analysis of the old play of *King Lear,* he concluded that it "is incomparably and in every respect superior to Shakespeare's adaptation."[6]

There have been few to follow Tolstoy in this opinion. Even that apostle of perversity, the late Frank Harris, while conceding Shakspere's careless dramaturgy, protests that Tolstoy "has missed all the poetry of Lear, all the deathless phrases."[7]

Almost a century before the publication of Tolstoy's essay, Goethe produced *King Lear* at Weimar without the opening scene. To him the division of the kingdom seemed absurd. Indeed, he thought that it might actually prevent the awakening of the audience's sympathy with Lear's later sufferings.[8] Goethe also anticipated Tolstoy's comparison of the old play with *Lear,* his conclusion being that the subject was not suited to tragedy and that Shakspere's changes were not always for the better.[9] Nevertheless, *King Lear* may have affected Goethe's own masterpiece. Joseph Wood Krutch has suggested that "the scene on the heath is the inspiration of all the Walpurgis nights of literature, from that of 'Faust' down to those of 'Ulysses' and 'Antic Hay'."[10]

"Ein alter Mann ist stets ein König Lear," Goethe epigrammatizes.[11] One regrets that neither he nor the great Russian achieved a just appreciation of the tragic stature of Shakspere's apocalyptic monarch. But, characteristically, Goethe, most Hellenic of the Germans, expressed himself with the greater moderation.

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[1]"Tolstoi dans 'Le Roi Lear,'" *La Nouvelle Revue,* XIV (July 15, 1914), 247-260.

[2]*Ibid.,* p. 259.

[3]*Bachofen-Freud zur Emanzipation des Mannes vom Reich der Mütter* (Bern, 1939), p. 26.

[4]Translated by V. Tchertkoff in *Fortnightly Review,* LXXXVI (Dec. 1906), 963-983, and LXXXVII (Jan., 1907), 62-74.

[5]*Ibid.,* p. 982.

[6]*Ibid.,* p. 66.

[7]*The Man Shakespeare and His Tragic Life-Story* (New York, 1923), pp. 226-227.

[8]Werner Deetjen, "Shakespeare-Aufführungen unter Goethes Leitung," *S Jb.,* LXVIII (1932), 28.

[9]James Boyd, *Goethe's Knowledge of English Literature* (Oxford, 1932), p. 49.

[10]"Shakespeare and Expressionism," *Nation,* CXXX (April 23, 1930), 500.

[11]The first line of one of his *Zahme Xenien.*

SOME NOTES ON SHAKSPERE AND *THE MIRROR OF KNIGHTHOOD*[1]

By Dorothy Atkinson Evans

A. Much Ado About Nothing

JOSEPH de Perott has suggested[2] that Shakspere "borrowed the story [of the impersonation] from *The Mirrour of Knighthood* rather than from Harrington's Ariosto." The arguments are that (a) "both works are equally full of bowers, arbors and woodbine (or jessamine) covertures. Even hiding among rose bushes for the honest purpose of eavesdropping, occurs in *The Mirrour of knighthood* (V, 127); (b) "It is said expressly" in the *Mirror* (III, 161) "that the duchess used to walk in the garden with her attendants"; (c) "the great stress which is laid on the honor of the three knights (III, 157, 159, 163) [is] to be compared with *Much Ado About Nothing*"; (d) "The damsel's urging Rosicleer and Liriamandro to act as Policena's champions corresponds to a similar urging by Beatrice. That splendid faith which we admire in the friar and Beatrice is attributed by the Spanish writer to the lover himself."

For these suggestions as to Shakspere's source, there is "perhaps more to be said"[3] than for some of Perott's other suggestions.[4] But Henry Thomas concludes that the impersonation is a literary commonplace.[5] With much of Perott's "evidence" there is no need to deal further, for Thomas has dismissed it with adequate reasons for so doing.[6] I shall try here to make a fresh start on the problem of Shakspere's debt in *Much Ado*.

In *Henry IV*, pt. 1 (1598), Falstaff alludes to the *Mirror*[7] when he says

> Indeed, you come near me now, Hal; for we that take purses go by the moon and the seven stars, and not by Phoebus, he 'that wand'ring knight so fair' (I, ii, 14 ff.)

This, I think, merely indicates that Shakspere knew of the *Mirror*, for it implies no knowledge that could not be gained by hearsay. But there is, it seems to me, reason in

Much Ado for believing that Shakspere was quite familiar with the *Mirror*.

As in the case of Spenser, so with Shakspere, we can disregard the *Mirror*'s third impersonation scene in the Ninth Part, for it was not published until 1601.[8] There were available to Shakspere, at the time of writing *Much Ado,* only the Polisena-Lusiano episode (1583, 222 ff.) and the Artalanda-Dalior episode (1586[?], 93^{v}-98). Either of these may have contributed elements to the plot of *Much Ado,* which is basically, of course, drawn from Bandello.[9]

The crucial speeches which reveal the plot are very brief.

At II, ii, 16, Borachio says:

> I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her [Margaret] to look out at her lady's chamber-window.

And later (11. 39-43) in the same scene he adds:

> offer them instances, which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber-window, hear me call Margaret Hero, hear Margaret term me Claudio, and bring them to see this . . .

At III, ii, 115, Don John says,

> Go but with me tonight, you shall see her chamber-window entered, . . .

And Borachio boasts at III, iii, 137-43:

> I have tonight wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero: she leans me out at her mistress' chamber-window, . . . I should first tell thee how the Prince, Claudio, and my master, planted and placed and possessed by my master Don Juan, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

Claudio demands of Hero at IV, i, 88-89:

> What man was he, talkt with you yesternight,
> Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?

while the Prince avows (*ibid.,* 94-96),

> My selfe, my brother, and this grievëd count
> Did see her, heare her, at that houre last night,
> Talke with a ruffian at her chamber-window, . . .

These are the only parts of the play that we are here concerned with; the play's denouement has no counterpart, in any way, in the *Mirror*.

Shakspere seems to have altered his plan, for after promising Claudio (III, ii, 15) that he should see "her chamber-window entered," the conspirators only show a lady leaning "out at her mistress' chamber-window." Had the window been entered, Shakspere would have been depending again upon Bandello. But he seems to have rejected this. The original plan would have left everything to the lover's imagination, the scene taking place indoors.[10] The scene which Shakspere actually reports, however, occurred in plain sight of witnesses. Throughout Shakspere's lines the emphasis is upon the words "to see"[11] and "chamber-window." This emphasis on visual evidence alone is sufficient to eliminate Bandello and Ariosto as sources for this central part of the hoax. At this point in the story's development, Shakspere seems to have the *Mirror* redactions in mind.[12]

In *Much Ado* there is no textual evidence that ladders were used in the impersonation scene (which is reported only). But ladders or "lines" are essential for the Ariosto scene (*O.F.*, V, 46, 50, 51) which must have used an upper, or slightly elevated, window. The *Mirror* versions, like *Much Ado,* employ no ladders below windows[13] and the action takes place on the ground. In the 1583[14] and 1586[?][15] accounts, the arrangements between the maid and the pretended lover require the villain to station himself at a postern gate reached through a garden. Even in the 1601 account,[16] which is too late for Shakspere's use, the villain "coming into the garden, lesse armed than was needfull, went to the window, so passionate that he knew her not." Probably Shakspere has the earlier scenes in mind; in using no ladders he is closer to the *Mirror* than to the Genevra story. Although in the impersonation scenes of the *Mirror,* the lady and villain walk together in a garden, there is in the 1586[?] story[17] a statement that Polisena and Lusiano had plighted their troth privately at her "window that had a grate of Iron, out of the chamber of the saide dutches, on a dark night, with two damsels as witnesses."

Another crucial line is Borachio's statement (III, iii, 143-44) that the witnesses "saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter." Now all three *Mirror* episodes are set in a garden[18] but the element of distance in creating the illusion is most important. It is stressed in the 1586[?] text:

> although the Moone did shine verie cleere, yet because shee was somewhat a farre of, they could not discerne anie other but that she was the Dutchesse.[19]

Emphasis in the play is put upon hearing, and upon the use of names. Bandello has no such scene as Borachio reports (II, ii, 39-43), nor has the 1583 *Mirror* episode any record of speeches. But in the 1586[?] account much is made of the use of names, as in Shakspere. Roberto is heard to say, "Oh my Ladie Polisena . . . " (p. 228) and finally the maid is overheard saying, "Well, then my good Lord, . . . Heere your true and faithful Polisena, doe receiue and take Roberto Duke of Saxonia, for her spouse . . . All this that passed betwixt them, was very well heard by the three knightes that were in secret." (228v)

Finally, Shakspere's scene is witnessed by three men—the prince, Claudio, and Don John (III, iii, 143-44). In this detail perhaps lies the clearest evidence that Shakspere had the *Mirror* in mind. Of all the redactions, only the 1586[?] one contains this detail. Roberto, whose motive is (223v) "to haue his will and win" the lady, confides his plans, as Don John does, to his three friends (227-227v). These are the knights Ricardo, Carmelio, and Anibardo. It is arranged that they "might remaine on the wall, and heare and see all that should passe in the garden." Roberto says to them,

> I am verie desirous that you (my Lordes) would . . . go with me thether, and to secret there whereas you may heare and see all that passeth, . . . that then, you (if occasion did so serue) as witnesses of that ye sawe, may declare the truth of all that which you haue seene and heard . . . the three knightes . . . dyd promise unto him for to accomplish all his request." (227v)

"Occasion" did serve—as Roberto planned it should and as it similarly did in *Much Ado*. The three witnesses later

swear to what they saw and heard. Their evidence is given publicly before King Tiberio, Polisena's father (224-224^{v}). The motive in using witnesses is identical in the two tales and the results are comparable.

Leonato's attitude toward his publicly shamed daughter is comprised of grief for her discrediting, of credulity for the princes and Claudio (LV, i, 152), and of anger. He talks of killing Hero. In the 1586[?] *Mirror* (224^{v}) the king also believes the three knights, "Whose credit is so great with the king, that he doth beleeue them more and better then if all the knights in his court had spoken and sworne it." After Lusiano revealed his betrothal to Polisena and after she corroborated the statement (225), the king,

> beleeuing verilie that shee had made her selfe sure and giuen her word unto both of them [Roberto and Lusiano], and the great good will which she bare unto Lusiano, was the occasion that shee did falsifie and denie that which shee had promised unto the Prince Roberto, and for that hee would cleere this doubt by iustice, . . . (225.)

he imprisoned Polisena in a strong tower.

Polisena's guilt was to be tested in combat. The king ordered (1586[?], 225)

> that the Duke and the three knightes that were his witnesses should maintaine and defend that which they had spoken and sworne, and that Luciano and the Dutchesse should in the space of one moneth bring knightes . . .

as champions. The battle is actually held between the four accusers and the champion (to whose aid come Rosicleer and Liriamandro). In *Much Ado,* Claudio is challenged by three men: Leonato and Antonio (V, i, 65-85) and Benedick (V, i, 121-201). The play allows the challenge to pass but the number of challengers—if Don John were added, as he would have been had he not fled—is the same. It should be noticed, however, that in the play the four plotters are not, as in the *Mirror,* the potential combatants. Claudio, accepting the plotters' evidence, makes the accusation and so becomes both challenger and injured lover. Lusiano remains only injured lover, for in this redaction the plotters are the challengers. Putting it differently, in

the *Mirror* the challenge is made *against* innocence (Lusiano), but in the play the challenge is made *by* innocence (Antonio, Leonato, Benedick). Shakspere thus basically alters the relative position of "good" and "evil," giving "good" the stronger position throughout.

Alwin Thaler[20] sees *The Faerie Queene* redaction as an intermediary between Ariosto and Shakspere. I think the *Mirror* is the intermediary, as I hope the following paragraphs will explain.

In Ariosto the monks tell the first story of Genevra. The second version is told by the maid Dalinda, who also is the maid guilty of the deception. Her motive in the plot is similar to that of Pryene (*F.Q.*, II, iv, 25-26) and of Margaret (*Much Ado*, III, iv, 22-23), and of the unnamed damsel (1586[?]) and of Tarsina (1583, 95).

In the 1586[?] and 1583 *Mirror* stories, no monk is used as narrator or seeker of champions. That dual rôle is given to another maid of the accused lady. Thus there are two maids, one destructive and one beneficent in influence. Shakspere needed a narrator of the deception and he needed some one to obtain champions. He has used Beatrice (IV, i, 280 ff.) for both tasks, a combination of functions which appears in the 1586[?] and 1583 *Mirror*. The girl who seeks the champions is the one who reveals the deception but she is no party to it. The faithful maid (1586[?], 223) describes how

> this gentle Luciano in a darke night came unto the windo whereas he found his faire Polisena, and betwixt them was concluded in bandes of Matrimonie by word of mouth, in my presence, and in the presence of an other damsell of the Dutches, (who I doe beleeue is not cleere of this treason that I will tell you)."

It is further stated (226v) that Roberto sought for this purpose

> to know which of the damsels that waighted upon the dutches, was ye basest of linage & poorest, for ye these two things in inconstant minds be easiest to accõplish their lusts and desires. And when he had learned out this, and found that there was one (amongest them that serued the Dutchesse) which had these qualities (or better to saie inconueniences) he did secretlie practise to talk with her, the which being done, what with requests, & gifts, & faire promises, in the end he brought her unto the bent of his bow, . . .

Thus the *Mirror* provides the functional prototypes of both Beatrice and Margaret, and is actually closer to Shakspere's story than is *The Faerie Queene*. In fact, the whole episode of the play seems clearly to be indebted to the 1586[?] *Mirror* version of the Genevra story.

[To be continued]

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[1]The research on which this work is based was made possible by award of The Margaret Snell Fellowship by The American Association of University Women and by a grant-in-aid by the American Council of Learned Societies.

[2]"The Probable Source of the Plot of Shakespeare's *Tempest*." *Publications of the Clark University Library,* I (1908), no. 8. Perott's references to the *Mirror* (given here in parenthesis) are to the French edition.

[3]*Spanish and Portuguese Romances of Chivalry* (Cambridge, 1920), 277.

[4]Perott. "Beaumont and Fletcher and the *Mirrour of Knighthood*." *Mod. Lang. Notes* XXII (1907), 78, suggests that the Lusiano-Polisena story [*Mir.,* 1578, 220 ff.] may be a combination of Ariosto's Genevra story with that of Duarda and Cardonia in *Palmerin de Olivia.*

[5]*Op. cit.,* 181; *cf. Variorum, Much Ado,* 345-46, and Barbara Matulke, *The Novels of Juan de Flores and Their European Diffusion* (The French Institute, New York, 1931), 189 ff.

[6]*Op. cit.,* 277; see also Henry Thomas, *Shakespeare and Spain* (Oxford University Press, 1922) or in *Homenaje a Menéndoz Pidal* (Madrid, 1925), vol. I.

[7]*Op. cit.,* 275-76.

[8]Sigs. B2 ff.

[9]H. H. Fruness, *Variorum* ed., *Much Ado,* vol. 12, 311 ff. *Cf.* also Barbara Matulka, *op. cit.,* 193 and Alwin Thaler. "Spenser and *Much Ado About Nothing*." SP XXXVII (1940), 225-35.

[10]Bandello's lover entered the house, so the lover inferred the betrayal scene but did not see it.

[11]Furness, *Variorum,* vol. 12, 101, note 41.

[12]Thomas, *Shakespeare and Spain,* p. 29, rejects Perott's suggestions that Shakspere drew on the *Mirror,* though he considers Shakspere's possible debt in *Much Ado* as Perott's "most plausible claim."

[13]A ladder is used to scale the garden wall in 1586[?], 227v-228; in 1583, 96, a "timber" is used to help Lidiarte over the wall.

[14]Pp. 96-96v: Lidiarte is to stand "by the posterne gate of the pallaice, beeing the entraunce into the garden: for thereout will issue thy Ladye."

[15]P. 227; the maid "shoulde come forth into a gallant fresh garden, which was under the window of the Dutchess, . . . ; p. 228; Roberto "descended downe [from the wall] into the garden, whereas he remained till within a little while after he heard a little posterne to be opened, whereat came forth that false damsell . . ."

[16]Sig. B4v.

[17]P. 223.

[18]On the "formerly general use" of *orchard* for *garden,* see *O. E. D.* The *Mirror,* 1586[?], 122 illustrates the interchangeable use.

[19]P. 228.

[20]*Op. cit.*

DRYDEN'S SHAKSPERIAN CRITICISM AND THE NEO-CLASSICAL PARADOX

By Irving Ribner

THE critical concepts of Neo-classicism were clearly defined and allowed for no deviation. The observations of Aristole and Horace, in the hands of Boileau, had been forged and crystalized into a set of inviolable rules, and literary art was bound in by adamant laws. The entire system was clear, precise and dogmatic. But, in spite of its neatness and apparent perfection, Neo-classical criticism began its inevitable process of deterioration almost as soon as it came into being. In the early Shaksperian comments of Ben Jonson, we find the genesis both of Neo-classical criticism and of that paradox which crriticism by rules could not avoid, and which was finally to destroy the philosophical bases of such criticism and to open the way for the Romantic movement.

Ben Jonson's criticism of Shakspere was very general in its nature, and although it stated principles, it did not apply them specifically. It was with John Dryden that English criticism became a definite art. "He is the first critic who discusses principles and determines merit by reference to them."[1] In the critical writings of John Dryden, we find the general rules of Jonson given specific application to Shakspere's plays, thus giving us the first clear application of Neo-classical critical method. And similarly, in Dryden's Neo-classical evaluation of Shakspere, we find more clearly defined the elements of deterioration which were already latent in Ben Jonson's early statements of that critical philosophy.

Dryden's Shaksperian criticism, beginning in 1664, and attaining most significance in his *Essay on Dramatick Poesie* in 1668, covered a period of almost thirty years, and in it he subjected the greatest poet of all to the narrow criteria of an age which could not see beyond itself. "To Dryden, the Elizabethan age was unrefined and unlearned. Poetry was in its infancy. Audiences were pleased with anything."[2] He accepted the dictum of his own age that the

literature of the Elizabethans must be regarded with tolerance as the product of the unlearned and uncouth. He censured Shakspere's failure to observe the unities, his mingling of comedy with tragedy, his excesses of passion, his lengthy metaphors, his loose constructions, and in short, his violation of every principle of literary technique which the Neo-classical age revered as sacred. But, in spite of his never-abating emphasis upon the rules, Dryden still had the critical acumen and the poetic perception which enabled him to see that Shakspere was a great artist in spite of his neglect of those rules. Mingled with the blame, we find in Dryden the most lavish praise of Shakspere's genius. Shakspere for him was the man of "the most universal mind."[3] But, as Augustus Ralli has written, "Again and again, after one of his flights of praise, he droops wings and settles upon earth, and blames Shakespeare according to current orthodox notions of what verse should be or tragedy or comedy, or plot or character drawing."[4]

What greater tribute can there be than the paragraph in *The Essay on Dramatick Poesie* in which he says of Shakspere:

> "He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes anything, you may see it, and feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation; he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there."[5]

That those lines were written with the utmost sincerity, we cannot doubt, but how strange they sound in the light of Dryden's constantly expressed critical doctrines, and his equally constant belittlement of Shakspere's age and his art. Augustus Ralli has written that Dryden's virtues were his own and his faults those of his age.[6] Dryden's faults lay in his acceptance of the critical dogmas of his age; his virtues lay in a poetic insight which enabled him to perceive the beauties of an art which exceeded the limitations of dogma. The two sides of him were in perpetual conflict. Neither could triumph, and only an inexplicable paradox could result.

Here, then, was a problem which Neo-classicism could not resolve. A critical system of evaluation by rules, which lavishly praised a work as a whole, while it severely criticized its component parts, could not exist. One after another, the Neo-classical critics of Shakspere in the 18th century attempted to explain away the paradox, but the explanations grew only lamer and lamer, until they died out completely and the entire critical system gave way.

If anyone should doubt that the paradox was unavoidable —that it was the inevitable concomitant of any intelligent application of Neo-classical criticism to Shakspere—he need only look at the work of Thomas Rymer. Never in the history of English literature has there been a more dogged exponent of the rules of Neo-classicism. Dryden could make allowance for the greatness of Shakspere, in spite of his violation of the rules. Rymer could not. Certainly, the position of Rymer is the more logical one. It is a strict observance of the rules of Neo-classicism, and in its application there can be no conflict or paradox. But what utter nonsense his criticism becomes when it is applied to Shakspere. In his *A Short View of Tragedy,* a little pamphlet which appeared in 1693, he reduced Shakspere to the stature of an uncouth writer of nonsense,[7] and that conclusion, moreover, logically followed from his strict application of the Neo-classical rules to Shakspere's art. When he applied his critical system to Milton, he spoke of "that *Paradise Lost* which some are pleased to call a poem." Rymer's criticism was logical and straightforward. Dryden's paradox was avoided. We shall let the results of such criticism speak for themselves.

If we examine 18th century Shaksperian criticism, we shall find two dominant schools. On the one hand, there are the strict Neo-classicists. Men like Edward Taylor[9] followed Rymer and found only faults in Shakspere. They are a small minority of insignificant critics, the only value of whose work is as illustration of what utter stupidity could result when the Neo-classical paradox was avoided.

On the other hand, the followers of Dryden are the significant and dominant school. They include the most important Shaksperian critics of the age: Lewis Theobald,[10]

Elizabeth Montagu,[11] Francis Gentleman,[12] Samuel Johnson,[13] William Richardson,[14] and many others. All praised Shakspere while they censured him, and all made excuses for his failure to observe the rules. If Rymer and his followers were ridiculous, they were at least consistent. These were confused and uncertain, and in the last analysis, meaningless.

To John Dryden, then, the champion and greatest exponent of Neo-classicism, goes the credit of having laid the groundwork for the collapse of the critical movement with which we associate his name. In his subjection of Shakspere to criticism by rules, he unwittingly emphasized the already latent paradox upon which his own critical system was to perish.

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[1]V. K. Ayappan-Pillai, *Shakespeare Criticism from the Beginning to 1765,* (London & Glasgow: Blackie & Sons, 1932) p. 39.

[2]John Olin Eidson, "Dryden's Criticism of Shakespeare," *Studies in Philology,* XXXIII (1936) 279.

[3]W. P. Ker (ed.) *The Essays of John Dryden* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), I, 288.

[4]Augustus Ralli, *A History of Shakespearean Criticism,* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1932) I, 6.

[5]Ker, *Op. Cit.,* I, 79.

[6]Ralli, *Op. Cit.,* I, 6.

[7]Thomas Rymer, *A Short View of Tragedy,* (London: Richard Baldwin, 1693) *Passim.*

[8]Quoted by Pillai, *Op. Cit.,* p. 49.

[9]*Vide* Edward Taylor, *Cursory Remarks on Tragedy,* (London: W. Owen, 1774).

[10]*Vide* Lewis Theobald, *The Censor* (London: Jonas Brown, 1717).

[11]*Vide* Elizabeth Montagu, *An Essay on the Writings And Genius of Shakespeare,* (London: J. Dodsley, 1769).

[12]*Vide* Francis Gentleman, *The Dramatic Censor or Critical Companion,* (London: J. Bell, 1770).

[13]*Vide* Walter Raleigh (ed.) *Johnson on Shakespeare,* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1908).

[14]*Vide* William Richardson, *Essays on Some of Shakespeare's Dramatic Characters* (London: J. Murray and S. Highby, 1797).

THE USE OF CONTRAST IN *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

By E. J. West

THE Merchant of Venice is admitted by many honest readers, who have heard or read too much concerning it before encountering the work itself, to be a disturbing play. Quite possibly it is disturbing just because it is more exclusively a play than many of its fellows in the Shakspere canon. I do not mean that the other plays have a lesser value as drama, but rather that *The Merchant* has a lesser value as literature. If we except such obviously bravura passages as "the quality of mercy" speech and the "on such a night as this" sequence, the script (for it is well, at least occasionally, to remind ourselves that Shakspere's primary concern was to provide scripts for an acting company and not materials for academic research) offers *actually* less of poetry, of characterization, of sustained and lucidly articulated "moral philosophy," than does the bulk of the author's work. I am aware that conventional criticism has discoursed endlessly upon "the truth of the characterization," the "moral grandeur," the pointing of "the great lesson of life," and so on. In reading the play as a trained student of drama and a professional producer of theatre I simply do not find these things. In reading what the critics have written I can usually figure out upon what they have built their theories, but I feel increasingly that the genesis of most of these theories lies in a preconceived idea of what Shakspere should have done rather than in an actual estimate of what he did. And what he did, I firmly believe, was to provide a company of actors with an excellently constructed script to fill out in production pretty much as they would.

The fate of Shylock and the gradual change in interpretation of his character in the hands of successive actors from Macklin to Irving or Warfield or Skinner, or even some probably better unmentioned contemporary actors, is a tale too often told. Possibly it is less frequently realized that Portia, at least after women began to play her, appa-

rently suffered equally varied interpretations. Ellen Terry, in one of her lectures on Shakspere, used to remind her audiences of the German "tradition that Portia is a low comedy part."[1] When the players themselves have exercised almost completely divergent interpretations of some of the leading characters, it is not to be wondered at that the critics have been equally successful, for instance, in demonstrating to their several satisfactions that Antonio is at once a colorless figurehead and a completely realized and comprehensible three-dimensional character, and Gratiano at once a witty moralist and a loathsome and disgusting libertine. May not all of the trouble have arisen because at the time of the play's composition Shakspere's company was, for the time being at least, lacking in "stars," but provided with a largish ensemble, each of whom was capable of holding up his share of the excellently arranged action? This, at any rate, is the conclusion I would reach after an honest attempt to evaluate the play as written. I admit there are suggestions in plenty for individualizing almost all of the many characters, but primarily this is a comedy of intrigue, and shows a young dramatist in mid-career successfully providing for his company almost a "pot-boiler." For *The Merchant* will apparently "go" whether it be played under that title or alternative ones of *The Jew of Venice* or *The Lady of Belmont*.

Shakspere certainly wrote the play in mid-career, whatever date we may prefer to accept, and in it we see him arriving at something of a sense of proportion in his observation of his fellows: notice, for instance, the difference between the near-idolatry of the young-gentleman type in preceding comedies and the variously critical portraits of Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano, Salanio and Salarino. We see him definitely attaining mastery of the writer's medium of words: note the increasingly flexible blank-verse line, the increasing eschewing of arbitrary outcroppings of rhymed verse, and the greatly improved management of varying prose styles. And we witness an almost amazing dexterity in blending together four diverse plots and harmonizing them largely through a series of variously graduated contrasts. It is with a brief listing of a few of these innumerable

contrasts which at once blend and articulate the play that I am here concerned.

Countless critics have drawn attention to the contrast between what Dowden well called the "Rembrandt-like dusk and shadow of Shylock's life" (or Venice) and what he might well have called the Titian-like "brilliance and . . . sunshine of the life of Portia" (or Belmont).[2] If we make a mere schematic listing of the settings of the twenty scenes of the play, we find immediately the obvious but subtly varied contrast of place which forms such a large part in the architectonics of the original script: Act I, Belmont framed in Venice; Act II, Venice framed in Belmont; Act III, Venice alternated with Belmont; all these leading up to the final contrast of Act IV, Venice, with Act V, Belmont. Any consideration of contrasts in the action itself would involve us in too lengthy an analysis: suffice it to hint at the gradations from the obvious contrast of the various casket-scenes to the more subtly interfused and finely interwoven contrast of the letter-of-the-bond between Antonio and Shylock with the letter-of-the-promise, made by Bassanio and Gratiano anent the rings. But I would particularly emphasize the strong series of contrasts formed by the very conception and interlocking of the characters.

In earlier plays Shakspere's normal practice had been to divide his characters into large groups, each group being largely homogeneous within itself, and contrast being present mainly in the differences between the groups as wholes. Even in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream,* despite the clever bridgings, such as those affected by Puck and Bottom, the characters fall absolutely into three groups. But in *The Merchant* the many characters are so interrelated and so logically (or is it imaginatively?) intermingled that we may actually for once need the academic hunter of sources to keep us reminded of the many plots so fused into one. We find first such strong contrasts as that of Antonio versus Shylock: Christian versus Jew, honest merchant versus crabbed usurer, and so on, this contrast shaded a bit by the linking of the two characters through mutual intolerance and bigotry; that of Antonio versus Bassanio: melancholiac introvert versus gay materialistic extrovert; or that of An-

tonio-Bassanio versus Bassanio-Portia: friendship versus love. And these strongest contrasts (I have not attempted to exhaust them) are strengthened by a series of comparisons and symmetries, each involving its own variously shaded contrasts.

The real friendship of Antonio and Bassanio, for instance, is balanced against what we might term the business-companionship of Shylock and Tubal. The Antonio-Bassanio friendship is more evenly balanced by that of Portia and Nerissa, but the symmetry here seems less obvious since Nerissa is eventually paired off not with Antonio but with Gratiano, a new balance being thereby effected of Portia and Bassanio against Nerissa and Gratiano. Antonio, with his satellites Salanio and Salarino, is balanced by Bassanio and his companions Gratiano and Lorenzo; this symmetry is given its needed variety by the greater differentiation between Gratiano and Lorenzo, Salanio and Salarino being almost completely undistinguishable, even in production (surely Shakspere's deliberate intent here is implicit in the similarity of the names). The love-relationship of Portia-Bassanio and Nerissa-Gratiano is echoed in that between Jessica and Lorenzo, this last, of course, providing itself a major contrast with the Jew-Christian relationship of Shylock and Antonio. There are obvious mutual contrasts among the six suitors discussed by Portia and Nerissa in the second scene of the first Act, and between them and the three suitors whose courtship by trial is dramatically presented: The Prince of Morocco, the Prince of Arragon, and Bassanio. The Princes themselves contrast with each other, and together they form a contrast with Bassanio. The tendency toward the pairing of the major characters is repeated on a minor level in the differences of characterization presented in the two Gobbos (this becomes mere hobby-horse riding: I realize perfectly that Old Gobbo was added for a practical, not an aesthetic, reason—another comedian had to be given a part). Launcelot, incidentally, is skilfully used as a bridge between groups, supporting the link formed by Lorenzo and Jessica; also the faintly suggested affection of Launcelot for Jessica is employed to point up the stronger passion between Lorenzo and Jessica.

Doubtless this seeking of contrasts and comparisons, forming the separate pieces which go to make the structure of the whole, might be carried much further, but the parenthetical dubiety expressed above warns me that the hobby-horse may already be rocking too violently. I believe I have demonstrated, however, that unless the play is read, or preferably performed, and criticized with all of these contrasts and interrelationships in mind and in concrete presentation on the stage, the real harmony of point and counterpoint which the playwright composed is destroyed, and a finely plotted piece of theatrical workmanship is degraded to a mere "starring-vehicle" for egocentric actor-managers and "first ladies of the stage."

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[1]Ellen Terry, *Four Lectures on Shakespeare* (London, 1932), p. 116.
[2]Edward Dowden, "The Merchant of Venice. Introduction," *The Comedies of William Shakespeare* (London, 1912), p. 323.

THE *KING LEAR* QUARTO

By S. A. Small

THE most puzzling quarto of any of Shakspere's plays is that of *King Lear* commonly known as the *Pide Bull Quarto* (1608). It shows the traces of many attempts to improve (?) the reading of the text. Though not as 'literary' in its diction as the Folio version, it is full and rich in suggestive readings, revealing changes made by a reporter, an actor, a compositor, a press reader, a scribe, and even by the author himself. Since Charles Knight in 1841 noted that the "metrical arrangement is one mass of confusion" and Nikolaus Delius in 1874 concluded his study in the *Jahrbuch* "gegen die Annahme einer späteren Revision des Dramas von Shakspere's Hand," critics have given much analytical study to its text and cannot agree on its authenticity nor on how much influence it had on the editors of the First Folio. A thorough study of the textual problem of this play has recently been made by Leo Kirschbaum in his book, *The True Text of "King Lear"*, 1945, published by The Johns Hopkins Press.

The confusion surrounding the text of the *King Lear* Quarto well illustrates the task of the critic in selecting what he thinks are the proper readings for an authentic text. The textual critic tries to remove obscurities in the text so that the original intention of the author may be clearly understood. It is in the province of the critic to use bibliographical methods whenever the text can be compared with earlier transcripts when these are available. In the sixteenth century there was no customary way by which a book got into print.* The indifference of an author like Shakspere to the publication of his works reflects the communal conditions of authorship existing in the Renaissance period as carried over from Medieval times. The confusion resulting from this has caused much uncertainty in editing the proper text of *King Lear*. The Medieval scribe whose forte was accuracy in copying became in the sixteenth century a vital factor in literary publication because his work took on

*I refer here to the uncertainties of authorship, not to the legal requirements for printing.

a wider intellectual usefulness. The scribe became the amanuensis.

The oral nature of dramatic expression made it necessary for a playwright to depend on stenographic assistance. That Shakspere dictated much of his writing to an amanuensis skilled in shorthand seems plausible when we think of playhouse conditions as well as the textual conditions of most of his plays. If he did not himself dictate scenes or at least changes in his manuscript to an amanuensis, the prompter and the actors certainly did, as we have available evidence that changes were freely made after a manuscript was submitted for acting.

The business of this scribe (turned amanuensis) is the cause of much of our difficulty in determining correct readings. He became, we feel sure, more intellectually able to understand and criticise the work he was transcribing. More self-conscious and more humanly interested in his work, he became subject to making errors; and the exactness of the old medieval scribes, who worked more mechanically, disappeared from the workmanship of the stenographers used by Elizabethan playwrights. He must also have been a handy man in noting down suggestions and selecting what he thought was authoritative revision.

For this reason, during Shakspere's time there could be no such thing as a perfect copy. Manuscripts which were copied and recopied for purposes of circulation certainly reached the printer finally in a condition much different from the original. This attitude about making copies does not indicate any piratical intentions, for the custom of consciously making changes, while copying, was generally acceptable in the Renaissance as elucidating the original. The author's personality thus became of little account; what did matter was communal understanding. The author was anonymous in spirit; the spectator or reader did not keep in mind the author, as is so horribly the case today in what we call "original" literature.

I mention these points because they influenced Shakspere while he was making and working over his own text.

Shakspere was a part of this communal activity in which his own personality was lost. The task of determining a true text of *King Lear* as undertaken by Leo Kirschbaum must be conditioned on the critic's willingness to form subjective judgments as to autograph readings; he must know when the authority of Shakspere is present.

The textual problem of *King Lear* has been brought closer to solution by the recently published volume by Leo Kirschbaum. This work follows the publication of many vital articles on the same subject, including those of Daniel, Greg, Chambers, Van Dam, and Miss Doran, to say nothing of Nikolaus Delius and Alexander Schmidt who did the pioneer work. W. W. Greg in several studies, especially in his "The Function of Bibliography in Literary Criticism Illustrated in a Study of the Text of *King Lear*," *Neophilologus,* XVIII (1933), and in his more recent publication: *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare,* 1942, summarized the various issues and contentions in the problem but failed to make a final solution of the problem of the Quarto text. Miss Madeleine Doran has placed high authority on the Quarto text in her "The Text of *King Lear*," *Stanford University Publications,* 1931. This estimation is rejected by Leo Kirschbaum who reduces the value of the Quarto to the category of a "bad" quarto.

He proves his thesis by pointing out in detail seventy places in the quarto where contamination takes place to such a degree that the whole text is proved to be one based on memorial reconstruction. This contamination may take the form of repetition or of telescoping. An example of repetition is as follows:

> reserve thy state,
> And in thy best consideration checke
> This hideous rashnesse, —F (1. 1. 141-3)
> Reverse thy doome, and in thy best consideration
> Checke this hideous rashnes, —Q (B 3r)

Kirschbaum's comment (p. 17) on these passages is somewhat typical of all his comments:

> F's "reserve thy state" becomes "Reverse thy doome" in Q's 151. This is a memorial anticipation of Q's version, "Revoke thy doom,"

> of F 167's "revoke thy guilt." The reporter's memory was, perhaps, not uninfluenced by recollection of similar conventional phraseology in other Shakespeare plays: "Revoke that doom of mercy," *III Henry VI,* II. vi. 46; "reverse the doom of death," *Titus Andronicus,* III. i. 24.

Kirschbaum thinks the *King Lear* reporter had a "capable auditory memory but not a very high degree of intelligence" (p. 30). His memory worked faster than his hand, resulting in bringing together similar bad constructions. This is called "telescoping" which occurs frequently (*e.g.* the Quarto reading of F (II.iv.82-105).

In one instance, however, Kirschbaum has to admit a piece of evidence which indicates (as Daniel believed) that F was based on the uncorrected copy of the Quarto. Here are the individual readings:

> QA: come and tends servise
> QB: commands her service
> F: commands, tends, service — II. iv. 103

Of these three variant readings, the corrected Quarto (QB) gives the correct emendation. The Folio reading has not yet been explained, but Kirschbaum suggests that "tends" is an old form of "attends" meaning "waits for." This does not, however, explain away the second comma, though it could be regarded as a superfluous mark indifferently put there by the printer.

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EDMUND'S NATIVITY IN *KING LEAR*

By JOHNSTONE PARR

HE only natal horoscope in Shakspere's plays which has any "technical" significance is Edmund's nativity in *King Lear*. Nonchalantly and scoffingly Edmund tells us:

> My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail, and my nativity was under Ursa major; so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. Tut, I should have been that I am had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinckled on my bastardizing.[1]

We need not dwell upon that item in the horoscope known as the Dragon's Tail; many editors have noted its sinister influence.[2] But Edmund's statement that his "nativity was under Ursa major" and the conclusion that this configuration supposedly made him "rough and lecherous" has been ignored by all critics of the play.[3]

Ursa Major (known also as the Great Bear or the Big Dipper) is a group of fixed stars north of the zodiac whose astrological nature was reckoned as that of the planets Mars and Venus, with Mars predominating. Claudius Ptolemy, undoubtedly in the Renaissance the supreme authority in astrological matters, writes:

> The constellations north of the zodiac have their respective influences, analogous to those of the planets, . . . *Ursa Major* is like Mars, but the nebula under the tail resembles . . . Venus in its influence.[4]

If we consult the works of the astrological authorities, we discover that these two planets which governed Ursa Major produced a character remarkably similar to that of Edmund.

Richard Saunders, in a huge compendium which reports a host of Renaissance physiognomists and astrologers, specifically calls the Martial man "rough." Says he

> Those who are born Martial and under Aries are red or flaxen hair'd, a rough sort of people, rude and invincible; . . .[5]

Cornelius Agrippa describes the Martial man similarly: "A sour, fierce, cruel, angry, rough countenance and ges-

ture are ascribed to Mars."[6] And Ptolemy would ascribe many particulars of Edmund's character to the dominant influence of the War-planet:

> Mars alone having dominion of the mind, and placed with glory, makes men . . . irascible, warlike, versatile, powerful in intellect, daring, bold, . . . obstinate, . . . self-confident, contemptuous, . . . tyrannical, . . . ; but, posited ingloriously, he makes men cruel, mischievous, sanguinary, tumultuous, . . . rapacious, pitiless, familiar with crime, restless, . . . hostile to their families, and infidels in religion.[7]

As we have seen, the constellation of Ursa Major exerted the *combined* influences of Mars and Venus. The astrologers do not leave us in doubt as to the dispensations of such a configuration. Ptolemy continues:

> Should Mars be conciliated with Venus, and . . . if he have an inglorious position when thus conciliated, he makes men overbearing, lascivious, sordid, opprobrious, adulterous, mischievous, liars, fabricators of deceit, cheats of their own families as well as others, eager in desire, . . . debauchers of wives and virgins, daring, impetuous, ungovernable, treacherous, faithless, dangerous, . . .[8]

And Albohazen Haly, chief representative of the Arabian astrologers, agrees:

> If Mars is in harmony with Venus and in a good position, they create a native who . . . loves a vicious and depraved life. Such a native . . . is a reveler, . . . and has unlawful and sinful relations with the opposite sex; he is . . . a mocker and a deceiver, . . . easily angered. But if these planets are in positions opposite to that of which we have spoken, they make the native . . . meretricious, a dishonorer, a teller of lies, a deceiver of friends and others; successful in satisfying his desires, seducing and corrupting good women and virgins, wise in perpetrating frauds and betrayals. He is a perjurer, a scoffer and reviler, a reprobate in habits and thought, busily engaged in conceiving corrupt acts and in the practice of abominable fornication.[9]

It seems that almost any relationship between Mars and Venus would produce similarly deplorable results, for John Taisnier remarks that if Mars be even in the "house" of Venus (*i.e.*, in Taurus or Libra),

> . . . the native shall be voluptuous and a fornicator, perpetrating wickedness with women of his own blood, becoming guilty of incest, or committing adultery with women whom he has seduced by promises of marriage; . . .[10]

Thus the planet Mars (whose influence predominates in Ursa Major) is a malicious worker of evil, particularly when he mingles his influence with that of Venus (who also influences through Ursa Major). There is certainly no doubt that the astrological authorities would presage that one born under the influence of Ursa Major would be "rough and lecherous," and destined to become a villain of the first order.

Now Edmund's career shows him to be in large measure the living embodiment of astral influences exerted by the malignant constellation of Ursa Major. He is recognized immediately as the villain of the play after his first soliloquy, in which he informs us of his religious infidelity, his audacious independence, and his "invention" whereby he shall dupe his legitimate brother out of the latter's inheritance. As he pursues his plan of maliciously playing upon Gloster's credulity, we see Edmund's scoffing and contentious attitude toward his old father's belief that the recent eclipses portend no good for the kingdom. His complete independence, egotism, and religious infidelity are seen again in his belittling remarks about astrology, a science in which Lear, Kent, and Gloster all had faith.[11] His treachery and his martial lack of sympathy are fully exhibited by his deliberate betrayal of his father into the hands of those who pluck out the old man's eyes and send him stumbling off to Dover. His skill in devising deceits and frauds is well attested by the manner in which, Iago-like and in the fashion of a professional criminal, he dupes both Gloster and Edgar. But he is no coward; indeed, he possesses an unusual amount of military prowess, valor, courage, and strength of will. It is he who leads the "powers" of Albany and Regan, wins the battle against the invading French army, gives orders as to what should be done with the captives. He is bold enough to defy Albany and courageous enough to accept at once the challenge from Edgar.[12] Doubtless the predominance of Mars in his nativity is responsible for such martial—such "rough"—qualities. For Edmund is, like the Martial man, a purposeful adventurer—determined to seize first his brother's possessions and then (through deceitful and unscrupulous con-

ciliation with Goneril or Regan) the crown. Also like the Martial man (to use Professor Bradley's phrasing), "he regards men and women, with their virtues and vices, together with the bonds of kinship, friendship, or allegiance, merely as hindrances or helps to his end."[13]

The planet Venus asserts her influence in Edmund's nature also, for there is no question but that he is (as Shakspere tells us) "lecherous." We learn of Edmund's adulterous proclivities when he accompanies Goneril from Gloster's castle to her own.[14] And it is not long thereafter that we find Regan suspicious of his having been abed with sister Goneril.[15] Such amorous depravity is indeed the sort attributed to the influence of Venus in conjunction with Mars; and to this astral configuration might also be attributed Edmund's nonchalance and faithlessness behind his frank confession:

> To both these sisters have I sworn my love;
> . . . . . .
> Which of them shall I take?
> Both? one? or neither?[16]

At all events, an Elizabethan audience who perceived that Edmund was born under the "rough and lecherous" constellation of Ursa Major would have strongly suspected him sooner or later to "compound" with such women of the play as were assailable.

So, it seems to me, did Edmund appear to an Elizabethan audience: a Martial man with strong Venerian proclivities, because of the predominance of Ursa Major in his natal horoscope. And if this evil configuration appeared to the Elizabethans in any measure responsible for Edmund's preoccupation with fraud, deceit, perjury, contemptuousness, religious infidelity, and lechery, perhaps we need no longer wonder with Professor Bradley why it is that "a man so young as Edmund can have a nature so bad."[17]

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[1]I. ii. 121-125 (Furness edition).

[2]We should observe, however, that Edmund does not say that the Dragon's Tail is in his horoscope, but simply that his father and mother "compounded" under the Dragon's Tail—or at a particularly evil time.

[3]The one exception is E. B. Knobel, "Astrology and Astronomy," in *Shakespeare's England* (Oxford, 1916, 1932), I, 459, who writes: "All the stars in Ursa Major were reckoned to be of the nature of Mars, who was 'choleric and fiery, a lover of slaughter and quarrels, murder, a traitor of turbulent spirit, perjured, and obscene'." Although he cites no reference, Mr. Knobel is quoting from William Lilly's *Christian Astrology* (London, 1647; reprinted, 1939), pp. 40-41; and his statement that Ursa Major was governed by Mars alone is inaccurate.

[4]*Tetrabiblos sive Quadripartitum,* trans. J. M. Ashmand (London, 1822; Chicago, 1936), Bk. I, ch. x. Numerous editions of Ptolemy's *Quadripartium* were published in the sixteenth century: in 1533, 1535, 1541, 1552, 1554, etc.

[5]*Physiognomie, Chiromantie, Metoposcopie* (London, 1653), p. 157. At the beginning of this work, Saunders lists almost two hundred authors as his authorities.

[6]Henry Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *De occulta philosophia,* or *Three Books of Occult Philosophy or Magic,* ed. W. F. Whitehead (New York, 1897), Bk. I, ch. lii, p. 156.

[7]Ptolemy, *op. cit.,* Bk. III, ch. xviii. Similar statements may be found in Claudius Dariot's *A Briefe . . . Introduction to the Astrological Iudgement of the Starres,* trans. Fabian Withers (London, 1583, 1591, 1598), sig. D3r; John Indagine's *Briefe Introductions unto . . . Natural Astrology,* trans. Fabian Withers (London, 1575, 1598), sigs. Plv, P2r; Augier Ferrier's *A Learned Astronomical Discourse of the Judgement of Nativities,* trans. Thomas Kelway (London, 1593), p. 14; and many others. (Copies I used are those in the Folger Shakespeare Library.)

[8]Ptolemy, *loc. cit.*

[9]*Liber completus in iudiciis stellarum* (Venice, 1485, 1531; Basle, 1551, 1571); cited by Ioannes Baptista Porta, *Coelestis physiognomoniae libri sex* (Rothomagi, 1650; published also in 1603), p. 77.

[10]*Absolvtissimae Chyromantiae Libri Octo* (Coloniae Agrippinae, 1563), p. 615; cited by W. C. Curry, *Chaucer and the Mediaeval Sciences* (New York, 1926), p. 101.

[11]*Cf.* Hardin Craig, "The Ethics of *King Lear*," PQ, IV (1925), 97-109, and his *Shakespeare* (New York, 1932), p. 851; Professor Craig maintains that "Edmund's denial of planetary influence must be set down as a sort of religious infidelity."

[12]V. iii. 41 ff.

[13]A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy,* p. 301.

[14]IV, ii.

[15]IV. v. 19 ff.; IV, vi. 261 ff.

[16]V. i. 55-58.

[17]Bradley, *op. cit.,* p. 301.

A TECHNIQUE OF MOTIVATION IN *ROMEO AND JULIET*

By H. E. Cain

IT is a commonplace of Shaksperian criticism that *Romeo and Juliet* is extremely rich in lyric quality. A good many students of the play have even held that this feature constitutes its author's most important achievement in creating it. Chambers[1] regards it as "a tragedy of lyric emotion" rather than "a tragedy of philosophic insight," and Spencer[2] holds that in this play "Shakespeare's major contribution is the poetry of the great lyric passages." Examples of such commentary might be multiplied indefinitely.

It may be objected, of course, that the term *lyric,* as employed in such passages, is an extremely vague and indefinite one. This cannot be denied; but so is every other use of the term *lyric* when it refers to the general class of poetry it is used to designate. However, no two critics who, having read and compared *Romeo and Juliet* and *Romeus and Juliet,* and having observed the difference in the quality of the poetry of their authors, would greatly differ about the meaning of the term as applied to Shakspere's additions to his source. Munro is apparently so moved by the contrast created by this stylistic difference that he has allowed a certain extravagance to color his own description of it:[3]

> Brooke's story meanders on like a listless stream in a strange and impossible land; Shakespeare's sweeps on like a broad and rushing river, singing and foaming, flashing in sunlight and darkening in cloud, carrying all things to where it irresistibly plunges over the precipice into a waste of waters below. A rapturous passion, expressed in a perfect lyricism, and reckless of all on earth that did not lend it glory and add to its greatness, sweeps through and pervades the play . . .

In other words, in addition to inserting a number of familiar lyric forms—the quatrain, the sestet, the sonnet, the aubade, the epithalamion, and others—Shakspere infused into the whole structure of this play much of that poetic quality which is distinctive of the sonnets.

The purpose of the present paper is to draw attention to the presence in *Romeo and Juliet* of a lyric theme, hitherto, as well as I am aware, unremarked, extending from the first to the fifth act, and sufficiently variegated and expanded to constitute a significant unifying element in the play. More important, however, than this is the fact that Shakspere utilizes, probably with design, the imagery and ideas which are repeated in elaborating this theme in order to supply the motivation which impels the hero to his final act of self-destruction, and that he thus establishes an intimate and organic connection between the poetry which envelops the play and the dramatic action of which it consists.

The theme pivots upon the simple figment that Death is rival to the lovers of Juliet. It is first sounded as an undertone at the end of Act One. As the guests are leaving the Capulet feast, Juliet adroitly questions the Nurse to learn Romeo's name, at length sends her after him to inquire, and while she is gone reflects that if Romeo be already married,

> My grave is like to be my wedding bed. (I, v, 137.)

It does not occur again until Act Three, the whole of Act Two being devoted to the happy purpose of getting hero and heroine married; but when it reappears there, it has become clearer and more fully elaborated. Having learned of Romeo's banishment, Juliet laments her plight as she frustrately contemplates the "tackled stair" which her lover devised as a means to come to her:

> . . . poor ropes, you are beguil'd,
> Both you and I; for Romeo is exil'd;
> He made you for a highway to my bed;
> But I, a maid, die maiden-widowëd.
> Come, cords, come, nurse; I'll to my wedding bed;
> And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead! (III, ii, 132-137.)

And in even more pathetic tones it recurs at the end of the same act. Here Juliet voices her last plea for mercy and for the delay of the nuptials for her and Paris:

> O, sweet my mother, cast me not away!
> Delay this marriage for a month, a week;
> Or, if you do not, make the bridal bed
> In that dim monument where Tybalt lies. (III, v, 200-203.)

It is, however, in the fifth scene of Act Four that the details of the theme are most fully elaborated. Here Capulet, having beheld, as he thinks, the dead body of Juliet, bemoans to Paris their common loss:

> O, son! the night before thy wedding day
> Hath Death lain with thy wife. There she lies,
> Flower as she was, deflowerëd by him.
> Death is my son-in-law, Death is my heir;
> My daughter he hath wedded: I will die,
> And leave him all; life, living, all is Death's. (IV, v, 35-40.)

Here, it is worth observing, Death usurps the place of the lover and bridegroom, Paris, and conquers the chastity of Juliet. Capulet's highly imaginative assertion is chiefly significant for the boldness of its imagery, but in another respect the passage is tied close to reality, for Juliet was his only child. In any event, this passage prepares the way for a similar employment of the theme as the play approaches its catastrophe. As he nears the climax of his elegiac soliloquy in the final scene, Romeo, mistaken, like Capulet, in thinking Juliet dead, wonders at the beauty of what he cannot know are the signs of returning animation:

> Ah, dear Juliet,
> Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe
> That unsubstantial death is amorous,
> And that the lean abhorrëd monster keeps
> Thee here in dark to be his paramour?
> For fear of that, I still will stay with thee,
> And never from this palace of dim night
> Depart again; here, here will I remain
> With worms that are thy chamber-maids; O, here
> Will I set up my everlasting rest,
> And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
> From this world-wearied flesh. (V, iii, 101-112.)

Here again Death is cast as the lover, but not as the bridegroom. Previous manifestations of this theme of the courtship of death contained allusions to a "wedding bed" or

"bridal bed" but that image is noticeably absent from this passage. Instead, Death is depicted in its characteristic medieval garb, a skin and skeleton figure, monstrous and loathsome, to whom no young and tender woman might be imagined to yield. The purpose which Romeo expresses somewhat earlier when Balthasar brings him the false tidings of his wife's death,

> Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight, (V, i, 34.)

is thus validated with a sound, if lyric reason. For, with such an image in his eye, no husband could do less than Romeo does to shield his beloved from the terrifying embraces of this dark ravisher, this "lean abhorred monster."

There is in Brooke's poem no hint of the imagery which constitutes the framework of this theme. On the face of it, it appears to be Shakspere's work, though the figure is much after the pattern of a conceit such as one might expect to come upon in any Renaissance lyric. But whether Shakspere obtained his ideas from sources other than those usually accepted for *Romeo and Juliet* remains to be demonstrated, and they may therefore be taken, for the present, to represent additions to his sources.

Since it is generally conceded that the careful analysis of Shakspere's reasons for departing from his sources is one of the best approaches to the study of his art,[4] this phenomenon, which, for want of a better terminology, I refer to as an example of lyric motivation,[5] will perhaps repay a brief consideration. It is, of course, obvious that by means of such recurring imagery as the theme consists of, Shakspere was bringing to bear upon the developing action of the plot a synthesizing force. At the same time, however, he was deeply conscious of the necessity arising from the very nature of the central passion of the play to express himself frequently in a highly emotional and figurative language which critics of the play have been pleased to describe as "lyric." He experienced also some difficulty in motivating suicide in this Christian play for a Christian audience; for yet in *Hamlet,* in order to commit suicide, one had to be "more an antique Roman than a Dane," (V, ii, 352). At the same time, thus, that Shakspere suc-

ceeded in strengthening the motivation of his central character at a crucial point, he demonstrated the effectiveness of the principle of organic unity by creating a functional fusion of the lyric and the dramatic modes of expression.

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[1]E. K. Chambers, *Shakespeare: A Survey* (London, 1925), p. 69.

[2]Hazelton Spencer, *The Art and Life of Shakespeare,* (New York, 1940), p. 219.

[3]J. J. Munro, *Brooke's 'Romeus and Juliet',* (New York, 1908), p. lix. It seems appropriate at this point to discuss the propriety of the use of the term *lyric* in the present context. It is used here partly because there seems to be no more exact or scientific term which might be substituted for it without adding to the difficulties, and partly because every responsible critic who has so far dealt with *Romeo and Juliet* has used the term freely to refer to just those things which it is here used to refer to. The one important assumption which underlies the use of the term above is that it refers to the type of imaginative utterance and poetic imagery which characterizes Romeo's elegiac soliloquy (V, iii, 74-120), and it may be pointed out that a number of critics of the play have specifically indicated that it is such poetry as this in particular which they refer to when they describe the play as *lyric.* (See, for example, Tucker Brooke, *et al.,* edd., *Shakespeare's Principal Plays,* [New York: Century, 1927, rev. ed.] p. 38, where MacCracken holds that this soliloquy is "perhaps the greatest speech of pure lyric passion in all Shakespeare." See also, Thomas Marc Parrott, *Shakspeare* [New York: Scribner's, 1938], p. 165.)

[4]Virgil K. Whitaker, "Shakespeare's Use of his Sources," *Philological Quarterly,* XX, 381-2,

[5]By lyric motivation I mean that a dramatic action, namely, the suicide of Romeo in this case, is motivated by an imagined situation which exists only in the poetic imagery of the play and which is proper only to what I hold to be a lyric frame of reference.